

Focus on People

Compiled by Heike Hasenauer



Boland: Getting pinned by Carter.

FOUR weeks before his 57th birthday, **COL Thomas A. Boland**, a state attorney for the South Carolina Department of Social Services and an Army Reservist, became the oldest soldier to complete Airborne School at Fort Benning, Ga.

Former President Jimmy Carter met Boland in Plains, Ga., to pin on Boland's jump wings.

The chief of the Civil Military Operation Center for the 360th Civil Affairs Brigade at Fort Jackson, S.C., said: "I've been wanting to do this for a long time, but different missions were more important at the time. I certainly didn't plan to be the oldest jumper."

Boland began his career in the Marine Corps in 1962 and spent his last year of active duty in 1966, in Vietnam, as a noncommissioned officer. He joined the Army Reserve in 1978, was commissioned in 1979 and later completed the Infantry Officer Advanced Course, also at Fort Benning.

During his career Boland served in Vietnam, Grenada, Saudi Arabia during Desert Storm, Haiti, Bosnia, Honduras, Panama and Egypt. "All of the missions were important," said Boland, who realized that to "really be a part of this civil-affairs unit, I had to have jump wings."

NO one with cerebral palsy can be a regular member of the armed services. But that didn't prevent **Clifford Lee Rousseau**, who has the disability, from becoming honorary command sergeant major of the 1st Battalion, 33rd Armor, at Fort Lewis, Wash.

Rousseau recently received a certificate of appreciation from the unit's commander, LTC Ernest C. Audino, for his support of the unit and love of the armor community.

Rousseau had an early infatuation with tanks. As a child attending Hanford School in Richland, Wash., he stared out the window as workers prepared to transport the vehicles to the Army's Yakima firing range. Rousseau so impressed his shop teacher with his passion for armor that the teacher carved him a wooden tank.

"The rest is history," said Sarildia, his wife of 18 years. She takes pictures and measurements of various tank parts to help Rousseau build the most realistic parts and accurately put them together.

Among his basement collection are a 15-foot M1A1 Abrams tank, a "lowboy" and a 2-foot-long M60. The couple recently completed a quarter-scale M60A3.

Rousseau spent more than three years building the intricately detailed, \$3,000 M1, which is entirely wood except for the nuts, bolts and hinges, Sarildia said. He worked from technical training manuals and photos.

"The track was probably the most difficult part to complete," Rousseau said, "because of all the pins,

center guides and end connectors."

The couple donated the M1 and M60A3 to the 1st Bn., 33rd Armor, and the unit displayed the M1 at the annual armor and cavalry ball.

Rousseau's military successes began in 1978, when, according to a former colleague, "his outgoing personality enabled him to rise to the rank of honorary first sergeant in the Alaska National Guard."

"Clifford's desire to be a real patriot and his 'can do' attitude are in keeping with the highest military tradition," wrote the Alaska Guard's COL John V. Hoyt.

While volunteering with the Washington National Guard, Rousseau accompanied 1st Bn., 803rd Armor, to Operation Green Thunder 1987, in Yakima. During the operation, he met then-LTG H. Norman Schwarzkopf, who made a lasting impression on Rousseau.

"Schwarzkopf took off his three-star hat, put it on Cliff's head and said, 'Take good care of this. Don't let anyone take it. It's yours,'" Sarildia said.

In 1992 Troop A, 9th Cavalry, 199th Infantry Brigade, also made Rousseau an honorary member. Chief of staff LTC Richard P. Geier presented Rousseau with a Stetson hat and cavalry spurs, traditional items of the cavalry soldier.

The following year LTC Robert J. Knieriem from the Washington National Guard made Rousseau an honorary command sergeant major of 1st Bn., 803rd Armor.

"The Rousseaus are a big part of our battalion now," Audino said. "They inspire us. We integrate them into

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Most of the soldiers who went through the school with Boland were stunned when they first saw him, he said. "They kidded me about being too old. They also knew that if I made it through, they'd better, too."

"All I can say is: 'Never give up. It's not about age. It's about self-confidence. If it can be done, you can do it too.'" — *SFC Donald R. Dunn II, 319th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment*

WITH 55 years of government service to his credit, **Berthald K. Levy** is among the longest-serving employees in federal service. He'll be 85 years old on Christmas Eve, but he still has no plans to retire.

Levy, who works in the mailroom at the Massachusetts National Guard's State Area Command in Milford, entered federal service in 1940, as a member of the 45th Infantry Division. In 1941, he served in North Africa, and in July 1943 took part in the invasion of Sicily. During the Italian campaign Levy was literally, "blown up," he said.

"I wasn't injured. I was blown up. The Germans had this big gun we called 'Anzio Annie,'" Levy continued. "I was standing about 10 feet from where one of its shells hit the ground. The concussion threw me up in the air."

many of our activities."

Besides all his honorary military titles, Rousseau has amassed an impressive collection of tank "stuff" in what he calls his "201 file." It includes tank designs, maps, certificates, letters of promotion and memorabilia, including autographed generals' photos, tank driver's licenses, training orders and badges.

Now Rousseau's working on his ultimate goal — "to make honorary captain." — *SPC Reebea Varghese, Fort Lewis, Wash., Northwest Guardian*



Levy: 55 years in service, and counting.

The shock was enough to send the young company clerk back to North Africa for a half-year hospital stay, after which he rejoined his unit.

In November 1945, he returned to the United States with the victorious 45th Div. Two years later he joined the Massachusetts National Guard, and in January 1949 took a full-time job with the Guard.

"In those days, you had to take sub-courses to get promoted, so I went through the 10, 20, 30, 40 and 50-level Adjutant General Corps courses," Levy said. As a sergeant major, he also completed Command and General Staff College — a school generally known for training officers — at Fort Leavenworth, Kan.

In 1969 he became command sergeant major of the 26th Inf. Div. And in 1970 he was the first state command sergeant major. Levy retired from military service in 1975 and moved into a civilian position within a year. He's held a variety of jobs since.

Having handled military paperwork since his days as a unit clerk in World War II, Levy said that it's the most rewarding job.

"I just like the idea of helping people," said Levy, who has helped some 2,000 National Guard retirees collect their retirement benefits. "Doing paperwork is just in my blood. Taking care of it correctly can make a big difference in someone's life." — *Massachusetts National Guard Public Affairs Office*

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Rousseau: Part of the Army.